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PREACHED BY

HENRY WARD BEECHER.

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THE SURE FOUNDATIONS.

"Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."—2 TIM. ii., 19.

It is the nature of truth, as it is developed by human intelligence and used for practical purposes, to gather to itself instruments and institutions. Wherever there is an original truth, not long after men come into possession of it, they express it by some ceremonial, some law, some institution, some custom, some doctrine or dogma; so that truths which, abstractly considered, are invisible and impalpable, tend to incarnate themselves for human uses. This is necessary; and if a people stand at a low point of civilization and intellectual culture, it becomes necessary that these forms or visible manifestations of truth should have a certain constancy or permanence. And yet, so soon as a human mind begins to act, all the external exhibitions of truth must be expansible, elastic, changeable, or else men will fall into resistance and revolution.

The permanence of great fundamental truths, and the infinite variability of the exponents of truth, in the form of law, custom, philosophical statement—these are the two great truths with which we are to expound the past history of religion in the world, and by which, also, we are to prepare the way for its development in the days that are to come. After a while, men lose sight of the truth in the instruments of it. They cease to worship the thing, and worship its exponent; so that, by and by, it is not the truth that men follow so much as its institutions.

SUNDAY MORNING, May 23d, 1875. LESSON: MATT. v. HYMNS (Plymouth Collection): Nos. 1225, 906, "Shining Shore."

And so, as soon as this takes place, men, following their senses and their lower nature, begin a process of idolatry, of professionalism; and they become worshippers of the sensuous. So it comes to pass that all religions tend on the one side downward, and on the other side upward. There are these two tendencies, perpetually at war with each other. One assumes to itself, improperly, the name of *conservatism*—for there is a noble conservatism; and the other takes on various names. It is the "new light"; or it is the "progressive view"; or it is the "reform view"; or it is the "New-School view." The tendency to carry on truth to a higher and nobler form co-exists with another tendency to hold the truth in just the same confined forms with which it has hitherto been served. And so, churches find in themselves the elements of explosion and of controversy.

Then comes revolution or reformation. Then comes sectarianism—or the principle, rather, from which sects grow. When a man of thought and warm feeling sees larger, or other, views than those in which he has been educated, if he be permitted to hold them, and if there be laid upon him no other law than this: "God's seal is, Depart from iniquity, maintain piety and virtue and manliness according to Christ Jesus, and hold the truth that is given to you," then he will abide, and the church will not be split. But if the church, its officers or its majority, says to every man who has, or thinks he has, a new view, "This is intolerable, not to be allowed: go out, or give up," then the church extrudes from itself that which is the germ of a sect. Sectarianism is not the fruit of liberty; it is the fruit of compulsion. It does not come from the wildness, or from the inward nature, of liberty of conscience. Sects are produced by imperiousness, by arrogance, by the side of the church that regards itself as infallible—and that side of the church is the majority, always. So, then, sectarianism is not the disease of liberty; it is the disease of its want or absence. As, when the body is weak and in morbid conditions, it breaks out into boils, so, when the church is weak spiritually, or in morbid conditions, it is very apt to break out into sects.

When these conflicts take place, when, in other words,

the variable elements of religion are changing, men forget the constant and the invariable, and become alarmed. Some men are giving up churches; some men are denying baptism; some men are denying the authority of the Lord's Supper; some men are declaring that there is no order of priests or teachers; some men are warring against the ecclesiastical forms of religion; some men deny the Trinity; some men deny the atonement; some men deny the character of man as depraved. All kinds of differences are going abroad in the world; and men say, "What will all this tend to? What is to come of all this? Something must be done. There must be some restraint, somewhere." They think that religion is perishing; and so there comes up the cry of infidelity, and atheism, and anarchy.

Now, if the fundamental truths of human nature and human society remain, they are God's best revelations, out of which the recorded revelation was made. There can be no final or fatal destruction of the products of these original and organic truths. You do not destroy the grass because you mow it. Right behind the scythe of the mower, the grass springs up again, if the root be left alone. You might sweep every church from the face of the earth to-day; yea, you might sweep the Bible itself out of existence, and those great causes from which originally sprang a visible religion, a visible worship, churches, and the Bible—those fundamental causes, still existing with primitive power, would reproduce them. And such a thing as exterminating religion and religious institutions is as absurd as exterminating the race itself would be. Destroy all temples and all statues in Greece, and art is not dead. Destroy all government in Rome, and all laws, and institutions of law, and government are not at an end in the world. They come again, pushed up by the original and organic necessity of human nature. Destroy every church and all revelation, if it were possible, and religion would not be destroyed, since it inheres in human nature and in the divine nature coöperative, and it would reproduce itself. There might be a great loss, and there might be confusion; but the final results would not be atheism, nor infidelity. A fundamental truth, then, may

have the stem and the leaves cut off above ground, but the root will not be affected,—and that is the vital matter.

Now, in the time of Saint Paul, vast changes were taking place. Mosaism, or religion as developed through the instrumentality of Mosaic institutions, had ripened and gone to seed, and was passing away; and in so far as the Gentile world was concerned, there was no further attempt on the part of the apostles to teach religion by the old forms and under the old methods. If you turn your eyes toward the Greek nation, which was the thinking nation of the world, they had knowledge, philosophy and art, but they had no moral sense. The Greek never had moral sense enough to maintain a government. The sense of justice—the sense of right and wrong—was, in them, relatively inferior to the sense of beauty and the sense of philosophical truth. If you turn to the Roman empire, there was organization, there was law, and an effete idolatry.

Now came Christianity. But Christianity in itself, in its very origin, was vexed with schisms, with disputings. There were men, like Hymenæus and Philetus, denying that there was to be any resurrection, saying that it was already past; and various controversies sprang up, partly from the heathen side, and partly from the Jewish side; and it was in the midst of these confusions that Paul made the declaration of our text, that "the foundation of God standeth sure."

No matter what this man thinks, or that man teaches; no matter what shadows come or go, be sure of one thing—that the immutable foundations of religion stand. They will not be submerged permanently, nor will they rot in the ground; and they have this seal or superscription, written, as it were, on the corner stone: "The Lord knoweth them that are his." There is the great truth of divine existence, and intelligence, and active interference in human affairs. God is not blotted out by men's doubts, or reasonings, or philosophies, themselves caused by the interpenetration of divine thought upon human intelligence. "God knoweth them that are his." "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." That is the other seal—aspiration for goodness; departure from all evil; an earnest,

thorough and persistent seeking after a godly manhood. There are the two elements. Whatever changes come at Athens; whatever changes come in Jerusalem; whatever schools may spring up and vex the early saints; whatever disputes may arise; whatever ceremonies may come or go, remember that the great foundations of truth are not affected. Remember that the two essential elements are, God living, intelligent, active, vitalizing; and man, what? Theorizing? man searching after the truth? man systematizing the truth? No, man seeking manhood; man developing himself. These are the two great fundamental facts; and these are the seals of this,—that the foundations of God stand sure.

Now, in our day, the world is full of conflicts and rivalries and superstitions of one sect after another. And then, besides all these theological and ecclesiastical conflicts which are going on and filling the world, there is that other great movement, beginning early, moving slowly, developed in greater and greater power through each period of the several last hundred years, and coming to great volume, as a flood comes in—the scientific tendency of our times; and it seems likely to displace a great deal. So it will. The scientific investigations of our times are going to be as the grasshoppers are to the trees and the crops of the West. They will eat off the leaves of a thousand things. If the archæological inquiries shall be substantiated; if the essential truths of the origin of men and the philosophy of the species shall be developed more and more perfectly, and applied more and more to human life, and to the questions which spring from it; if the philosophy of the mind begin to be studied and known, you may be sure that there are a great many manners and customs, a great many ecclesiastical laws and orders, which will lose the prestige and authority of being divine. A great many things which men have been taught to reverence and to hold as being revealed of God will be proved not to be divinely revealed; and there will be a great change. There will be a substitution of new things for old; there will be new organizations, and new liberties: but there will be nothing changed, by any progress of science, which

will touch the foundations. Therefore, all that conscientious and amiable fear, all that dread which is driving men into the Church, high-built round about, as into citadels and towers, as if they were to be besieged, that they may be secure against the incoming flood of infidelity,—all that is useless. The foundations are sure. Religion is not going to be changed by science in anything except its variable part. It is constant, and its fundamental elements are not going to be changed; and these fundamental elements do not lie in abstract statements of doctrine or truth. Such statements are not fundamental to anything except philosophical systems. It is important that a system which is worked out as a philosophical system of the universe should have certain great key-stone doctrines affirmed and maintained. The system demands it. Thus, the system of Calvinism demands predestination, fore-knowledge, fore-ordination. Take that out, and you have taken out the key-stone of the arch. But that doctrine is fundamental to what? To my personal character? to my honor? to my integrity? to my spirituality? I may accept it or disbelieve it, and be just the same. You may accept it or disbelieve it, and it will not affect your personal character. It is fundamental to an abstract system of moral philosophy or truth.

Or, if a church is formed mainly on government, the divine order of the priesthood is fundamental in that church. If there is a visible church, and if it be held that that organic and external church was ordained of Christ, and was to be perpetuated by certain channels of influence—namely, certain men taken out of many men, and endowed with authority and a vital force apart from their fellows—then that order of the priesthood is fundamental. But fundamental to what? To virtue? No. To piety? No. To salvation? No. To what? To a hierarchical church organization—that is all. It is fundamental to that, but it is not fundamental to anything else.

Or, if a church stands upon ordinances, if it be held that no man can be a proper member of any church until he has been baptized; and if it be held that no man is baptized until he has been immersed,—then that is fundamental, so far

as it belongs to church organization. But is it fundamental to piety? No. A man may be sprinkled, and be as much a Christian man as if he had been immersed. That ordinance is fundamental to the particular organization which holds it to be necessary—nothing more.

Now, there are fundamental elements in a Christian church which we ought to speak of, and which we ought to mean when we speak of fundamental doctrines; and there are those which are necessary for the formation of the individual character, and for the transformation of man from an animal to a spiritual being.

These are the fundamental truths which stand connected with the existence, government, and power of God in the world; and also with the organized development of human nature, that it may rise toward God. In regard to these two prime elements, this (God knoweth those that are his own, takes cognizance of human affairs, dwells among men, legislates and guides), and all that immediately pertains to it, is fundamental on one side; on the other hand (on man's side, on the under side of the question), all that which takes hold necessarily and immediately upon human character, all that which teaches the very vitality of integrity, and honor, and truth, and purity, and beauty, is fundamental.

Now, it so happens that there are a great many things fundamental to theology which are not at all fundamental to human nature; and it so happens, on the other side, that there are in human nature a great many things which are fundamental to the organization of a noble and manly character, but are hardly recognizable in theology at all.

We ought, then, to clear our minds of the misuse of the term *fundamental doctrines*. No doctrines are fundamental except those that teach the divine existence and government, or that teach the condition and wants of human nature, and its reconstruction, its re-organization into Christian manhood.

Let us see, now, what are, in every age, the grand features of Bible teaching on the subject of fundamental truths viewed in this later and proper light: not what are the institutions, nor what are the methods, nor what are the ordinances, nor what are the schoolmasters, nor what are

school-books of religion ; not what are the right or the wrong sects, but what are the great underlying truths of God's Word, in so far as they relate to divine nature and to human nature. And is it likely that these great underlying facts and doctrines will be changed, except to their advantage, by the progress of science, or by philosophical disquisitions, or by the advance of mankind in civilization, and in the institutions of philosophy ?

Early, probably earliest of all, was recognized the great truth of the difference between right and wrong. That is original, and it certainly is fundamental. All the way up, till you reach the plane of human life, there is no such thing as right or wrong. There is no right or wrong to the horse ; there is no right or wrong to the dog ; there is no right or wrong to the eagle : there is impulse, there is necessity, there is desire, there is fulfillment, but there is no moral sense in the great underlying species of existence. There is in man the sense of right and wrong ; and not merely the sense of it, but the organization which is adapted to it. In other words, as in every instrument that you employ, if you run it according to its own nature, it performs, but, if you run it contrary to its own nature, it will not perform ; so in the human constitution, the men who are brought up to recognize the fundamental difference between right and wrong grow in strength, in clarity of knowledge, in vitality, in power, in virtue, and in happiness, while the men who do not recognize this prime and original element in the construction of human nature diminish, die in weakness, perish. So that the distinction between right and wrong is not speculative, though men may speculate about it. It is instrumental, it is primary, and it is fundamental ; and, from the beginning of the Word of God clear down to the end of it, that distinction of right and wrong, or the existence of moral sense, is one of the patent features.

The sense of duty, or the impulse which is part of the constitution of the mind to do the things that are true and right, and to resist the things that are false and wrong, has belonged to all religious organizations. The instruction or education of men to the sense of duty has been part and

parcel of every system that has had any success; and in so far as heathenism has existed, it has been, not on account of its heathenism or idolatry, but because every system that is founded at all upon human nature, or that has any control of human nature, is obliged to recognize certain fundamental truths which belong to human nature. Therefore, education to duty has been part of the great revelation of God in sacred Scripture.

The Word of God has recognized, from the beginning, the composite character of man. From the beginning, it has taken for granted, and it has taught explicitly, that men were on one side fleshly, organized of matter, restrained by laws, and clothed with impulses that could exist only in connection with matter. Men are like animals, up to a certain point; and this has been recognized by Scripture from the beginning.

Beyond that, and higher, comes in another truth—namely, that men are spiritual, moral, religious. And here are those two great departments into which the human mind is divided—the upper and the lower. Reason, moral sense, and the affections of a higher kind, are the upper and superior: the impulses, the appetites, the passions, the body and its necessities, are the lower and inferior. The natural necessity that men should subdue the inferior to the superior has followed this fundamental recognition of the fact. So self-government and self-denial have been, from the earliest periods of Scripture, a fundamental part of the teachings of religion. The organic fact that men by nature are not good, but are susceptible of becoming good, has been from the earliest day a part of the teaching of Scripture. Men have not, even in civilization—certainly they have not as a race, and looked at historically—grown up to their ideal of manhood inevitably, as animals or plants do to their maturity. It is true that a lion never misses the way. Starting as a lion's whelp, he never turns out a calf or an ox. He comes to lionhood; and the horse comes to horsehood; and the eagle comes to eaglehood. Everything below a man is built on so narrow a pattern that with inevitableness it comes right up to that pattern, if it attains its fullness of strength.

There are no schools that teach hawks or doves. There are no churches in which lions, or serpents, or any of the lower animals, worship. It is not until you come to the human race that you find creatures so composite that their condition or nature has to be unfolded by assiduous labor and instruction. At the beginning, man is the farthest from himself; and he grows toward himself at every step of real development through life.

However much there may be of rudimentary excellence among men; however much better men may be by reason of their circumstances; however powerful the leverage may be which comes from heredity, taking the race comprehensively, it is true that man is not born at birth, that he has to work up through life by education, and that in the last estate there is that which amounts to a preponderance of the spiritual element within him. Then there is a new birth. The first birth gave him forth an animal, and the second birth gives him forth a spiritual being. From the earliest day, this has been taught. The weakness of men, their temptableness, their necessities, springing from their emptiness of all righteousness, and their need of culture and divine inspiration, are as preëminent in the teaching of the Old Testament as in that of the New.

Now, let any change take place in our text-books of mental philosophy, let any change take place in the history of the human race, no matter how much men may reject the teaching of the Bible, these great fundamental facts remain. The difference of moral quality in man; the absolute ignorance or emptiness of every man born into life, in respect to morality; the indispensable necessity of building the man that is born; the great need of divine interference and inspiration for the purpose of building him,—these great truths, lying at the very foundation of character and of civilization, are not dependent on any extra statement. They are apparent. They are just as ascertainable now as they were in the earlier ages. They need no revelation. Perish the revelation by which they were brought to man's belief; perish every institution by which they were impressed on man's imagination, or by which they are impressed on the convic-

shut up in the Bible, so that if a man should burn the Bible he would burn everything. I can understand how a man paddling in a skiff might have seen the whole population of the world in the ark, and said, "If that ark goes down, there will be nothing left;" but the Bible is not, in any such sense as that, an ark containing everything. You are the ark, every one of you. Every man who lives, carries the necessity of those truths which are found in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation; and if you should destroy this form, that form, or the other form, in which the truth is set forth, something else would spring up and take its place. That which is the product of the religious necessity in man and in the divine constitution of the world, would organize again a religious faith substantially like that which we have now. Those things which are matters of transcendent faith, and which are fundamental to the construction of human nature —not to the construction of churches, or of moral philosophies, but to the construction of human nature—the building up of men in Christ Jesus,—those things you cannot destroy. You cannot destroy that part of religion which has for its work man's highest development.

Therefore, though darkness might rule over the world, though you should burn down Princeton, and Alleghany, and Lane, and Yale, and Andover, and Tufts, and Gilmanton, and though every minister should die, and every church should sink, and though there should not be an ordinance, or a usage, or a Sabbath, you would leave behind that which would recreate them again. Men cannot live without a religion. They cannot be men without it. The State calls for it; art calls for it; home and domesticity call for it; the voice of mankind and the voice of the ages have called and are calling for it; and they are either ignorant or cowardly who fear that any great disaster is going to befall religion in consequence of the progress which is taking place in the investigation of truth.

What we want above everything else is truth, and liberty to make truth apparent. What we want is that men shall think. What we want is a recognition of their obligation to think. We want thinking carried forward, overflowing the

recognized, such as has never been known before. The teaching of the revelation of the existence of mankind beyond this life, I believe, is to receive from science a recognition, not only, but a confirmation,—for if in this world only we have hope, we are of all men most miserable.

It is said that virtue is desirable and profitable in such a sense that a man should be virtuous without any regard to future existence; and very likely, in a remote, vague, and general way, that may be true: but this I say, that it is an open, even question whether susceptibility in this world, as it is now organized, does not incur as much suffering as pleasure. If our affections are made quick, keen, in a realm where death is perpetually crucifying it, then it becomes a question whether it is desirable for a man to clothe himself with affection, and whether he does not invite sorrow fully as much as he does joy. It becomes a question whether disinterestedness is profitable beyond a certain very limited sphere, if this is the only life. There are certain great organic laws which ought to be obeyed whether a man lives again or not, on account of that higher manhood and those heroic qualities which are in man; yet I think, if you were to obliterate from man the faith of another life, of a higher disclosure, and of a better chance, you would strike a blow at those very things which make science possible—namely, the higher development of the human soul; and I believe that this doctrine of immortality which glinted on the hills of Judea, and was brought into ample light when Christ brought life and immortality to light, is to-day the motive-power of Christianity. I believe that this doctrine, too, will receive confirmation from science, ultimately. For it is fundamental. It is not fundamental to the lower forms of manhood; but when men rise up into their higher nature, and become men in Christ Jesus, then the doctrine of immortality does become fundamental; and without it the motives are paralyzed, and the nerves are insensitive to the higher forms of true excellence.

With this brief and very imperfect outline of the subject under consideration, I remark, in the first place, that no one need to have any great fear in regard to religion, as if it were

shut up in the Bible, so that if a man should burn the Bible he would burn everything. I can understand how a man paddling in a skiff might have seen the whole population of the world in the ark, and said, "If that ark goes down, there will be nothing left;" but the Bible is not, in any such sense as that, an ark containing everything. You are the ark, every one of you. Every man who lives, carries the necessity of those truths which are found in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation; and if you should destroy this form, that form, or the other form, in which the truth is set forth, something else would spring up and take its place. That which is the product of the religious necessity in man and in the divine constitution of the world, would organize again a religious faith substantially like that which we have now. Those things which are matters of transcendent faith, and which are fundamental to the construction of human nature —not to the construction of churches, or of moral philosophies, but to the construction of human nature—the building up of men in Christ Jesus,—those things you cannot destroy. You cannot destroy that part of religion which has for its work man's highest development.

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What we want above everything else is truth, and liberty to make truth apparent. What we want is that men shall think. What we want is a recognition of their obligation to think. We want thinking carried forward, overflowing the

old bounds, sifted, ground, and made into daily food. We do not need less, we need more, liberty of mind, liberty on every side; and out of greater liberty will come more of God, more of duty, more of virtue, more of inspiration, more of development into the spirit and mind of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Do you believe in a providence? Is this great world floating without a rudder, without a pilot or a captain? is time made up of chance-drifts? or is there a God? If there is a God, has he a future, and is he steering time and the race toward that future? And will he sleep or forget, and allow the race to run to ruin? The Word of God, the foundations of God, stand sure. There is a providence; there is a divine government; there is a drift of things; there is a purpose; there is to be a consummation; and nothing is to turn it back.

Now, this general fear will lead us to take into consideration the necessity of a closer union and affiliation of true Christian people, and persons that are true morally. You will take notice that the respects in which men have quarreled most are those most remote from the formation of personal character. Thus, one hemisphere was set over against another on the question of the observance of Easter-day. The Oriental Church and the Occidental Church split in two on that question. But, miserable man that I am, I never heard of Easter until after I was twenty years old; I had never thought of it; and yet I had tried to be honest, and had had a good deal of Christian experience. The Christian world, however, was split asunder on this question of Easter.

And what divides the Christian world now? What divides Rome from Brooklyn? Why do I and my venerable brother, Pius IX., stand over against each other? He does not fear me, nor do I fear him—in that, we are even; and on what account are we separated? In regard to morality, we are on the same ground. In regard to the constituent elements of human character; in regard to the organization of man; in regard to the great question of right and wrong; in regard to the sinfulness of man, and of his need of regeneration by the divine Spirit, and of the formation in him of a Christian

life after the pattern of Christ Jesus,—are we divided on these fundamental questions? If the Pope is orthodox on those points, then I am a Papist, so far as that goes; and if I am orthodox on those points, then he is a Protestant, so far as that goes.

Why am I separated from the Episcopal Church? Is it because I disbelieve in their prayers, in their inspired hymns, or in their saints? Is it because I think them to hold no truth of God, and no truth of human nature, and no educating process through which all must pass for salvation? I am at one with them in many things; but they say that they have a lineage which I have not, that they have a heritage which has come to them through the ages. These are questions about which a man may believe one way as well as another, and be as much a man in one case as in the other. A man that loves righteousness and truth, and conforms his life to those higher things, may believe in the unbroken apostolicity of the priesthood, or may disbelieve in it. The points on which we quarrel with the Episcopalians are of secondary importance; whereas, in respect to the great elements which have been operative from the foundation of the world, and which have been fundamental to civilization and to Christianity—namely, the nature of man, the necessity of his education, and the divine impulse for that education,—in respect to all these great elements, we stand together.

The only thing which separates me from many men who preach in the Unitarian churches here in Brooklyn, is the philosophical solution of the Divine existence. I believe in God; I believe that he has a power throughout the universe; and, whether it comes from three Persons or from one, the substance is, There is such a God, with such a nature, and with such a purpose, and with such a work; and that is believed by many and many a Unitarian as much as by me; and that is the fundamental element of Christianity. Not that the other things are unimportant or useless; but they are not of such importance as that they need separate a man from his fellow, when he sees that he has in him the image and the spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I am not separated from a man because he is an Armin-

ian. He may be as good a Christian with Arminianism as without it. I am not separated from the Calvinists by reason of their stridulous doctrines; for the great substantial verities they and I hold alike. I ought not to be separated from the Baptists, or from the Lutherans, or from any of the churches. Why? Because we all agree in regard to those things which are fundamental—namely, the wickedness and weakness of man, his salvableness through the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and his need of recreation by education and by the influence of the Spirit. Since we hold these together, why should we not substantially agree?

Now, when there is so much of general unbelief as the result of the movements of science upon the popular and the religious mind, and when there is so much shivering and alarm, and when there are so many tentative efforts to arrest the tide of infidelity, why should not Christian men stand more firmly together on those acknowledged foundations which are sure? Among the fluctuations and changes of philosophical systems, why should there not be more unity on those points about which there is no controversy?

I look with some surprise upon the tendencies of men to meet the incoming flood by holding firmer, as it is said, to the great sound doctrines of religion. There is many a man who for the last twenty years has not looked into the Westminster Catechism, but who lately, being scared upon reading Huxley and Darwin and Spencer, or because his young folks have been reading them, says, "These works are untying all the ends of things: my dear, where is my Catechism?" and he goes back and hunts up his old Confession of Faith, and the Catechism, Longer and Shorter, and says: "It is better, a good deal, to hold fast to the sound words that our fathers believed, and that carried the church safely through all dangers. I would rather venture on those than on these wild theories and speculations." And so they go back to a philosophy which was an inspiration at the time when it was given to the world, and which had a power that was adapted to the then wants of the human mind, and to the then stage of God's Church, and which then did its work, but which did it so well that we now are better prepared for something

new than for that. There were other facts to be disclosed, there was a light to come in, for which provision was to be made.

Others still, instead of running to the old Confession of Faith, or to the old Catechism, as to a citadel, come into a more rigorous inculcation of church life. Men are exhorted not to abandon the church of their fathers. They are urged not to give way to this dangerous doctrine—this laxity—of men. We see many tirades against charity, against sympathy, against magnanimity. There is a great uproar in the temples in regard to these milder and sweeter Christian graces, which are thought to be gaining ground too fast. The human race are so gentle, mankind are so placable, men are so intensely determined to forgive those who injure them, people are so outrageously amiable, they love with such a disinterested fervor, that when one ventures to *peep* from the pulpit kindness and forbearance, men cry out, "This is cutting the cords; this tends toward dangerous laxity; this is what the world cannot bear!" Men are so good that if you do not give them a little amalgam to hold the gold together they will wear out in circulation! and so, there are prudent people who, for fear that men will forgive too easily, and be too lenient and loving and merciful and magnanimous, say, "Ah, these liberal views will lead to great mischief!" They believe in blood and thunder. They believe that the way to hold men is to hunt them down and bind them!

Now, it seems to me what we need is, not to go back to old systems, or to cling to the old churches, but simply this: that we should search for the great fundamental facts and truths which stand connected with the development of human nature from animalism to spirituality, and work together on these common grounds. Not that I would abolish ordinances, days, or institutions. I say to every sect, "Act according to your belief in regard to these things. Keep your theory; ordain as you think best; organize as you think best; let your ordinances be such as you think best; make your philosophical systems such as you think best: but stand with your brethren. Do not let the veins of your life run just as far as the walls of your church, and then come back

again: let them go forth throughout Christendom." Let all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and in truth; let all who think that men are sinful, that they need help for their recovery from sin, and that there is a divine power in the world which is working for their reclamation,—let all such stand for those fundamental elements which tend to build up the human heart in truth, and honor, and fidelity, and disinterestedness, and self-government, and self-denial, and humility, and love, and obedience to God. Let men make these things their supreme aim, and stand with each other.

And now, at this time, when a common enemy is abroad, and pantheism is taught, and atheism is taught (it will be only for a short period, but it is capable of producing great desolation)—at this time, it is not for sects to build high their walls of separation: it is for them, rather, to break down those walls, and shake hands over the fallen stones that have separated them, and work together, heart with heart, and enthusiasm by the side of enthusiasm.

While this is my view, and while I would advocate it as applicable to Christianity in general, I feel that we are especially called, as members of Congregational churches, to desire and to labor for the very spirit of Christ, and to see that Congregationalism does not become sectarian. It was the glory of our fathers that Congregationalism never organized itself into an imperial form. Its fundamental element is that each local church is an absolute church, entire, perfect, responsible to God, and to none other; a church united to others by the affiliation of sympathy and mutual interest, but in no other way. Congregationalism has done its greatest work, not so much by its own extension, as by leavening other churches. There is not a hamlet in America that is not indebted to the old Puritan spirit of New England. New England sons and daughters have gone out, not to establish Congregational churches, but to establish the religion of Jesus Christ; and they have organized Presbyterian churches; they have gone into Methodist churches; they have joined Episcopal churches. The ministry of the Church in America have largely sprung, directly or remotely, from

Puritan loins. The spirit of Congregationalism has manifested itself in this, that it has acted as a leaven.

Now, leaven never asks to be the loaf. It only asks to make the loaf, and to be the leaven. Liberty, intelligence, personal obligation, the education of the individual, the making of society rich and of churches rich, the making of each person self-governing, self-reliant, and responsible to God—to develop these things has been the work of the spirit of Congregationalism. To his own master every man stands or falls. He is not the servant of any other man; and no church is the servant of any other church.

This spirit has changed the Christianity of the continent, not by superseding other organizations, but by infiltrating itself into them, and giving them larger catholicity, creating a sympathy in them by which they should all affiliate together, and yet be free, independent, as, in the army, the cavalry, the infantry, and the artillery are different, and yet equal. And, at this day, to attempt to ecclesiasticise the Congregational system, and make it imperial in such a sense as to go back on the track of our fathers, is to violate the spirit with which it started, and to take from Christianity one of the noblest and sublimest of all its features—that of churches organized individually free, leaving the members individually free, and relying not upon pomp, not upon architecture, not upon ceremony, not upon anything extrinsic, but upon the invisible power of a God-created manhood—upon the soul, and not upon the body.

So, then, I do not stand for the liberty of this church. I am not afraid about this church's liberty; nobody is going to carry you into bondage; I have no fear concerning this particular body of Christians; but the churches of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, of every name, are dear to me. And my fatherland, from where the wave washes the rock on which our fathers landed to the far-off shore where from the other ocean deep responds to deep, and from where winter never lets go to where summer holds on forever, in all its length and breadth, God has made inexpressibly dear to me. I inveigh not against any other denomination. I contest no theories and no ordinances. Hold them, only do not make

them imperious over me. Let me take them or not, as I please; and may grace and mercy and peace abide with every one of them!

Therefore, any disposition or attempt to build up walls between Congregational churches, or to infuse into Congregational churches the old hateful ambitious spirit of the priesthood, the aristocracy of the ages—that I shall contest; because I am commanded to resist the devil, and I know that the promise is sure that he will flee from me. And I long to see that day inaugurated when no man shall be in danger of being carried away to aristocracy and the bondage of the authority of one member over another; to that imperial spirit by which men shall say to their brethren or to their neighbors, "Thou shalt serve God as I command thee to serve him." That spirit we are, all of us, not with anger, not with malice, not with an evil eye or an evil heart, to resist. We are in meekness to instruct those who oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance.

In this work I have lived. I have lived in the largest spirit of liberty. It pleased God to give me my birth when we were in conflict with our mother country for our own jurisdiction and the ownership of our own ships; and, from that hour to this, the sense of independence, of right and of freedom, has been a part of my very blood. My mother gave it to me, and my father educated me in it; and as I grew to manhood I heard—only in imagination—the cry of the slave, enthralled. This great continent was in danger of a second night; and, from the very first beginnings of my public life, I wrought for freedom, never expecting to see it. Better has befallen me than befell him of old, who, having gone with his people through the wilderness, could not see the promised land. I have seen the Jordan divided, I have gone over with my people, I am in the promised land of liberty; and now, being free, my heart goes out for that freedom which comes from knowledge, that freedom which comes from virtue, that freedom which comes from faith in God and love to the Lord Jesus Christ—freedom in thinking, plenary, not punitive; freedom in worship; freedom where all liberty began, in the church of Christ. There, where lib-

erty had its birth in religion, the iron cradle of despotism has rocked the world; but the time has come when religion should be synonymous with individual liberty—liberty in belief, and liberty in the churches; and if it shall please God, before my sun goes down, to let me see that spirit which is rising and spreading, augmented and confirmed, so that all the auspices of the future shall be sure, I shall die content, blessing God that I have lived in this stirring age, and seen such blessed fruits gathered—though not by me, nor by reason of my labor. The blood of the martyrs, the tears of the imprisoned, the sufferings of the wronged, through hundreds and thousands of years—these have been God's instruments, and these are the powers that, gradually accumulating, have broken forth in our day, and brought us such blessed fruits of liberty, and virtue, and intelligence, and piety.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We rejoice, our Father, that we may come to thee at any time, and then most easily when most we need thee. While we lean upon thy staff, while thy rod comforts us and sustains us, while we have the joy of the day, the blessings of home, and the sustaining presence of each other, we lean upon thine instruments; but when these fail us, and sorrow clouds the day, and there are no instruments round about, we rise to thee; and then most condescendingly dost thou come to us, and in the darkness thou art bright. Thou art in the night our song and our gladness. Yea, thou hast given thy servants in every age the power of overcoming this world by that which is invisible, and of outshining the pomp of life and the glory of the day here by that other life and that eternal day.

We rejoice that thou hast taught thy servants how to make sorrows tumultuous with joy; how to count it all gladness when they fall into trials; how to rejoice in infirmities; how to make weakness strong, and emptiness full, and defeat victorious. Thou hast taught us that we live not by the passions, nor by the body, nor in outward and visible things. Thou hast taught us that the true man is in the soul, and feeds upon God, and communes with him. Grant, we pray thee, this day, that we may awake into the fullness of that upper life—into thoughts that shall soar easily above sordid care and trouble; that we may dwell in light; and that our souls may be as sanctuaries in which we may find God.

We beseech of thee, O Lord, that thou wilt accept our thanks for all the innumerable mercies which have thus far attended us. We thank thee for all the strength, for all the gladness, and for all the privileges which we have had. Above all, that we have been permitted to know thee, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent, and the power of his love, and that redemption which is through faith, and that inspiration which comes to love from love.

We rejoice that thou hast granted us for so many years to tabernacle together, to worship together, to rejoice together. We thank thee that thou hast made this church more populous than time and earth will permit; that thou hast borne away from visible sight multitudes out of our midst; that thou hast taken from bankruptcy and all risk of overthrow so much of our possession, and invested it where moth and rust do not corrupt, nor thieves break through to steal. How great is the company of those who belong to us, and to whom we belong! How great is the number who sing above, and to whom we sing responsive! How many reach out hands, could we but see them! How many hearts are in the presence of all those joys which on earth they apprehended only by faith! And we thank thee that we are, on such days as this, brought very near to our kindred and brethren. We thank thee that, on such days as this, the spirits of just men made perfect hover above us, and the communion of the saints is ours, and the distance and difference disappear, and we seem to ourselves to be lifted up, and to stand in the presence of God, and in the immortal company that are round about thee.

O Lord our God, as one and another go forth, and are received with songs, grant that we may send them forth with songs. Forbid that there shall be such discord of our earthly grief as that it shall clash upon the joy and the gladness of the heavenly estate. May we be grateful for those whom we love while they are with us; and may our joy in their behalf overmaster our selfish grief in our own when they go, so that we shall be richer and richer. For on earth changes come; but they that have gone loving are unchangeable, and they are ours forever. We know not into what men may grow; we know not what variations, separations, wide differences may spring up here among us; but they are one who are wrapped up in the light of the heavenly life, and they are our imperishable treasure. And so, in their immortal and perfect blessedness, and in God's gladness over them, may we assuage our grief, and cause it to wear the colors of the day, and not of midnight.

We beseech thee that thou wilt draw near to all in thy presence who have been afflicted; to all that this day are conscious of bereavements; and while thou dost permit their grief and chasten their tears, grant that they may also feel the comforting influences of the Divine Spirit. Dwell in every house. Be with those who watch their sick with full solicitude. Be with any who are upon beds of pain and weariness. Restore to health those who in thy providence thou wilt use again; and prepare for flight, singing as they go, those whose time is at hand.

And we pray, O Lord our God, that thou wilt be with thy servants in all the varied exercises and experiences of their households. Whatever may come to them of care and burden and trial, sanctify to them in strength, and patience, and humilty, and trust, and victory. So, we beseech thee, glorify thyself in the lives and dispositions of thy dear children.

We pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon all the labors of this church. We thank thee that thou hast inspired so many who have received freely, freely to give; and that thou art teaching them the joy of communication. Grant, we beseech thee, that they may be better and better prepared for the work to which thou hast appointed them. We thank thee that so many of those who are living without a shepherd and without care are sought out by thy people, and are cared for. Fulfill to every one, we beseech thee, thy gracious goodness, and cause those that make joy to have joy, and those that instruct to be themselves instructed, and those that strengthen the weak to grow strong in their work.

We beseech thee that thou wilt bless all the services of this church, consecrated by the things in which it prospers, and by the the things in which it has been called to suffer. May it more and more be purified, and exalted, and made heroic in the spirit of Christ Jesus.

And we beseech thee that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon all the churches round about us. Give them peace and concord. Grant that they may prosper in their several spheres of labor. May thy servants who preach the Gospel have more and more

of the spirit of Christ in their own hearts. And we pray that all divisions, and hindrances, and separations, and jealousies, and bickerings and envyings may pass away. Slay them. Thou that hast destroyed Satan, and art destroying his works, destroy whatever separates thy people from mutual confidence. And may all hatefulness and hating, may all disturbances and quarrelings, may all things that offend be taken away. May we dwell in the unity of perfect peace and confidence together. May all that believe see eye to eye.

And we pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon our land; upon all institutions of learning; upon all newspapers and books. Send forth as heralds of light and knowledge all of every profession whose business it is to maintain civilization, and to extend virtue. We pray for all rulers, for all kings, for all magistrates, for all that are in authority. Be pleased especially to bless the President of these United States, and those that are united with him in administration. Grant that they may be God-fearing, walking in the fear of God before men, honoring all thy precepts, and made wise and strong by inspiration from on high.

We pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon the world. Hasten that day when there shall be fulfilled those glorious predictions which have given it to Christ. May he take possession of it as his inheritance. At last may that kingdom come in which dwelleth righteousness, and may thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

And to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, shall be the praise evermore. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon the word which has been spoken. We pray that thou wilt inspire us with the love of that which is right and noble, and give us liberty without license. Give us freedom, and yet may we put restraint upon our freedom. Grant unto us the full sense of our rights; and yet may our lives be love-gifts to those who need them. So may we live as thou didst—thou that didst create the earth, and hadst not where to lay thine head within it—thou than whom the birds and the foxes had more possession. Grant that we may look upon thee, and take example from thee. And while we assert for ourselves our own power and freedom and liberty, may we hold it to be a duty higher than all others, not to offend or to stumble those for whom Christ died. So living, may we at last, joining the great caravan of salvation, appear in Zion and before God with songs and joy upon our heads.

And to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, shall be praise forevermore. *Amen.*

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